

REMARKS

This response is submitted in answer to the Examiner's Final Action dated May 29, 2003. Applicants have not amended the claims herein. Applicants provide arguments below, which addresses non-obvious features of both the independent claims and specific dependent claims. The dependent claim features may be incorporated into their respective independent claims, if necessary for allowance.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

At paragraph 3 of the Office Action, Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10-12 and 14-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vaghi, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,047,273). Vaghi does not suggest the subject matter provided by Applicants' claims. Specifically, Vaghi does not suggest a system that comprises: (1) a first party transaction identifier (TID); (2) a security routing identifier (SRID) for identifying particulars of a shipment by a shipping service that is independent of the second party to the e-commerce transaction; and (3) wherein the shipping service receives an item from the second party tagged with only the SRID and the TID for identification purposes and subsequently sends said item to said first party utilizing the TID for obtaining address only information from a background depository.

As described in the specification and recited within the claims, Applicants' invention involves a first transaction between a first party and a second party via an electronic depository. The electronic depository maintains personal and other (credit card, etc.) information of the parties none of which is transmitted during the actual e-commerce transaction (i.e., only the TID is transmitted between parties). The first transaction utilizes a TID to identify the first party and the transaction being conducted to the second party. The TID is also utilized to provide address information to a shipper that requests the address information using the TID.

Applicants' invention also involves a second transaction between the second party and the shipper (defined as an independent entity from the second party). In the second transaction, an SRID is provided by the second party to the shipper along with the TID. The shipper then utilizes these IDs to (1) identify the shipment of the item and (2) obtain addressing information for the item to be shipped to the first party. Notably, the second transaction involves an

electronic exchange of these transaction-related/generated IDs that results in the shipment of an actual physical (or electronic) item without the second party receiving specific personal data on the first party or the shipper receiving credit card/payment information about the first party.

Finally, in one embodiment, Applicants' invention also protects the personal information of the second party to the e-commerce transaction by providing the second party with a TID as well (see, for example, Claim 7). Thus, neither parties to the transaction ever receives any personal information about each other, the shipper also does not receive such information and the depository serves as the information source that is utilized to complete the payment and shipping operations in the background.

These individual features and the combination thereof are not provided by Vaghi. Vaghi primarily discusses purchasing updates to an internet-accessible shipping service via online ordering of the updates directly from the shipping service and downloading the updates to a locally stored shipping application. Sections cited by Examiner (i.e., col. 3, line 44-48, cols 5-7, and col. 8, lines 15-27) describe the features related to this purchasing of updates to the shipping service (see particularly col. 7, line 15- 52). These sections provide very little reference to E-commerce transactions involving two parties where a third party shipper is utilized to ship the purchased item once the transaction is completed between the e-commerce participants using only IDs generated solely for completing the transaction and shipping. Vaghi does not suggest having all personal information stored in a depository so that (1) specific personal information such as credit card information, etc. is never displayed to the second party or shipper; (2) the shipment of an actual physical (or electronic) item is completed without the second party having specific personal data in the first party; or (3) the shipper is only provided address information required to ship the identified item from the transaction.

From Examiner's statements in paragraph 3 of the Office Action, it would appear that Examiner has failed to fully understand the functional features and participants involved with the implementation of Applicants' invention. Notably, Examiner assumes that the shipper is synonymous with the second party of the E-commerce transaction rather than an independent, separate entity that is not directly involved in the E-commerce transaction. Thus, Examiner

incorrectly concludes that Vaghi's description of selecting a shipping method in cols. 5-7 has some relation to Applicants' description of the SRID and related functionality. Also, Examiner incorrectly concludes that "when selecting a carrier to ship... unique identifier is issued to associated the product with the entity ordering the goods/services," and that the shipping entity is given "only a transaction identifier, when executing its delivery function." Examiner provides no support for these conclusory statements, and Vaghi clearly does not teach or suggest these unique features of Applicants' invention.

Should Examiner wish to assert such statements in support of the §103 rejection, Applicants respectfully request Examiner provide a reference that supports such assertions.

Notably, also, Applicants' invention provides the depository to prevent transmission/exchange of personal information during the actual transaction, Vaghi clearly described such transmission as a part of its operation. Vaghi at col.8, lines 15-27 provides: "the payment information is encrypted for security purposes, and then transmitted to the MSSSPC to purchase modification of the selected features." One skilled in the art would realize that providing an identifier that accesses a background service to obtain information is inherently distinct from transmitting the information in encrypted form in the foreground.

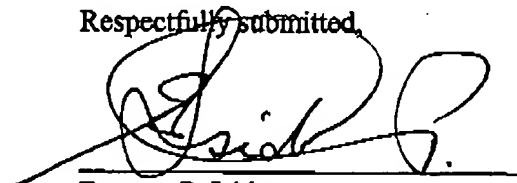
For the above reasons, one skilled in the art would not find Applicants' invention obvious in light of Vaghi. The above claims are therefore allowable over the reference.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have diligently responded to the Office Action by explaining why the claims are not obvious over Vaghi. The arguments overcome the §103 rejection, and Applicants, therefore, respectfully request reconsideration of the §103 rejection and issuance of a Notice of Allowance for all claims now pending.

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney of record at (512) 542-2100 if such would further or expedite the prosecution of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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Expires: May 8, 2004



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OCT 01 2003